

RONALD D. COLEMAN,  
DAVID SKAGGS,  
NANCY PELOSI,

From the Committee on National Security,  
for consideration of defense tactical intel-  
ligence and related agencies:

BOB STUMP,  
FLOYD SPENCE,

*Managers on the Part of the House.*

ARLEN SPECTER,  
DICK LUGAR,  
RICHARD SHELBY,  
MIKE DEWINE,  
JON KYL,  
J.M. INHOFE,  
KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,  
BILL COHEN,  
HANK BROWN,  
BOB KERREY,  
JOHN GLENN,  
RICHARD H. BRYAN,  
BOB GRAHAM,  
JOHN F. KERRY,  
MAX BAUCUS,  
J. BENNETT JOHNSTON,  
CHARLES S. ROBB,

From the Committee on Armed Services:

STROM THURMOND,  
SAM NUNN,

*Managers on the Part of the Senate.*

#### APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 3539, FEDERAL AVIATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1996

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3539), to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize programs of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees:

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of the House bill (except section 501) and the Senate amendment (except section 1001), and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. SHUSTER, CLINGER, DUNCAN, OBERSTAR, and LIPINSKI.

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of section 501 of the House bill and section 1001 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. SHUSTER, CLINGER, and OBERSTAR.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Rules, for consideration of section 675 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. DREIER, LINDER, and BEILENSEN.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Science, for consideration of sections 601-05 of the House bill, and section 103 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. WALKER, Mrs. MORELLA, and Mr. BROWN of California.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Science, for consider-

ation of section 501 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Messrs. WALKER, SENSENBRENNER, and BROWN of California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will name members from the Committee on Ways and Means at a later date.

There was no objection.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3666, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPRO- PRIATIONS ACT, 1997

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of earlier today, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3666), making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of Friday, September 20, 1996, at page H10733.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California [Mr. LEWIS] and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES] will each be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. LEWIS].

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report on H.R. 3666 and that I may include tables, charts and other extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, at the very beginning of this discussion on this very important bill, I want my colleagues to know just how strongly I feel about the need to change the tons of the debate that often takes place on this floor.

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Often it is shrill. Often it is dominated by extremes. All too often it is partisan for the sake of being partisan.

It is my view that we should work hard to change that fact. Public policy is best developed in an atmosphere of bipartisanship. Working together, we do a much better job for the public and the people that we were elected to represent. Mr. Speaker, the bill that we are about to consider is a reflection of

perhaps the best of that kind of effort to change our working environment.

With that, Mr. Speaker, my ranking member, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. STOKES], and I are pleased to present the 1997 VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Conference Report. This report treats all accounts fairly within the allocation provided to the subcommittee. This is a bipartisan bill which I have every expectation will be signed by the President.

The fiscal year 1997 VA-HUD bill reaffirms our continued commitment to serving veterans, to protecting the environment, providing housing for the poorest of the poor and ensuring America's future leadership in space.

In spite of the difficult challenges in putting this conference report together, this final product represents a balance of tough choices and common interests. Most importantly, it keeps the appropriations process on track for meeting the vital objective clearly stated by the Congress and the administration of balancing the budget by the year 2002.

A majority of programs have been funded at either the President's request or the enacted levels for fiscal year 1996. We have succeeded in holding the line on spending by reducing the rate of growth in several spending programs. This bill is a demonstration that deficit reduction can be achieved while keeping an ever watchful eye on every taxpayer dollar the Government spends. In fact, this legislation is \$3.2 billion below the President's request.

When this conference report becomes law, the Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies will have cut nearly \$20 billion in discretionary spending over the last 2 years. At the same time we have dramatically reduced the rate of growth of Government. Our work clearly demonstrates that Congress can move toward a balanced budget while at the same time delivering funding for people programs that have performed well.

This bill has drawn a good deal of attention due to the fact that three health care riders were added to the bill in the Senate. While this is, in my judgment, not the proper vehicle to reform our health care and insurance delivery systems, the House voted overwhelmingly to instruct the conferees to retain the Senate provisions. House and Senate leadership agreed that these legislative riders should be included in the final version of the VA conference report and thereby we have responded.

These provisions relate to mental health parity, to 48-hour hospital stays for mothers and newborns, and veterans benefits to children suffering from spina bifida as a result of their parents military service. Because these issues are really outside the jurisdiction of the committee and certainly beyond the expertise of either the committee or our staff, the mental health parity provision is not effective until January 1, 1998. The spina bifida provision is not effective until October 1, 1997.